

Enhancing academic writing skills and motivation: assessing the efficacy of ChatGPT in AI-assisted language learning for EFL students

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Abstract

Introduction This mixed-methods study evaluates the impact of AI-assisted language learning on Chinese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' writing skills and writing motivation. As artificial intelligence (AI) becomes more prevalent in educational settings, understanding its effects on language learning outcomes is crucial.

Methods The study employs a comprehensive approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative phase utilizes a pre-test and post-test design to assess writing skills. Fifty EFL students, matched for proficiency, are randomly assigned to experimental (AI-assisted instruction via ChatGPT) or control (traditional instruction) groups. Writing samples are evaluated using established scoring rubrics. Concurrently, semi-structured interviews are conducted with a subset of participants to explore writing motivation and experiences with AI-assisted learning.

Results Quantitative analysis reveals significant improvements in both writing skills and motivation among students who received AI-assisted instruction compared to the control group. The experimental group demonstrates enhanced proficiency in various aspects of writing, including organization, coherence, grammar, and vocabulary. Qualitative findings showcase diverse perspectives, ranging from recognition of AI's innovative instructional role and its positive influence on writing skills and motivation to concerns about contextual accuracy and over-reliance. Participants also reflect on the long-term impact and sustainability of AI-assisted instruction, emphasizing the need for ongoing development and adaptation of AI tools.

Discussion The nuanced findings offer a comprehensive understanding of AI's transformative potential in education. These insights have practical implications for practitioners and researchers, emphasizing the benefits, challenges, and the evolving nature of AI's role in language instruction.